

# **JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK PARK PROFILE**

## **PARK PURPOSE STATEMENT**

Jockey's Ridge State Park was established in 1975 in response to the efforts of local citizens concerned with protecting the unique scenic and geologic values of the dunes that were threatened by imminent development. Their efforts brought statewide attention to the area's protection needs. As a result, land for the park was purchased through local donations, donations from The Nature Conservancy, federal matching funds and state appropriations.

Jockey's Ridge State Park has become a well-known source of local pride and identity in the Nags Head area. The park marks the eastern extent of the state parks system.

Significant geological values of the park include the tallest active dune along the United States Atlantic Coast. The dune system is an excellent example of a medano, a large isolated hill of sand, asymmetrical in profile and lacking vegetation. It is also classified as a transverse dune, a dune forming a wave-like ridge transverse to the prevailing wind direction. The park functions to protect the dynamic processes that have created this migrating dune system. Jockey's Ridge, along with the adjoining Nags Head Woods, was designated as a National Natural Landmark by the U.S. Department of Interior in 1974.

The park is noted for its significant scenic resources. The dune is an extremely impressive land form. Visitors are attracted to its top where they can look out over miles of ocean, the towns of Nags Head and Kill Devil Hills, the Wright Brothers Memorial and watch ships at sea. People are drawn to the sublime view of the sun setting over the mainland, its golden hues reflected in Roanoke Sound.

Park visitors delight in the recreational opportunity to roam freely over and play on the sand and dunes; they run, roam, romp, slide and play simply for the child-like joy of it. The large, easily accessible area and prevailing ocean breezes provide a basic resource for many kinds of recreation.

As a natural resource, the park provides an important and increasingly limited habitat for native plants and animals. The four plant communities present include Dune Grass, Maritime Shrub, Maritime Evergreen Forest and Brackish Marsh. Jockey's Ridge State Park is an important resource for interpretive and environmental education activities concerning the adaptation of plant and animal species to the harsh coastal environment.

Jockey's Ridge was authorized as a state park in order to provide high quality management of its valuable geologic, scenic, recreational and biological values. The Division of Parks and Recreation is charged with preserving these values and providing park experiences that promote pride in and understanding of the state of North Carolina.

## **PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES**

**Sand Dunes:** This theme focuses on the dynamics, movement and formation of the sand dunes. It also concerns the plant and animal adaptations to the dune environment and the cultural history of the dune area. In addition, it focuses on what sand is.

**Diversity of Habitats:** This theme focuses on the plants and animals in the area, how they have adapted to the environment, how they have created niches for each other and how they modify sand movement.

### STATISTICS

Visitation (1999)	1,140,961
Operating Budget (FY 98-99)	\$ 451,384
Revenue (FY 98-99)	\$ 41,187

### VISITOR FACILITIES

Picnic areas (8 shelters, each with 2 tables and a grill)	Visitor center
Sound swimming and fishing	Exhibit hall
Estuarine access area	Boardwalk with overlook
Hang gliding	2 Hiking trails (2.3 miles total)

### CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION NEEDS

1	The <b>sewer/electric utilities renovations</b> project will place the main line underground, place power to houses underground, pump sewer tanks, install risers and move the telephone connector box located at the park entrance.	\$ 388,523
2	The <b>maintenance area improvements</b> project will construct a 6-bay vehicle storage building, vehicle lift, flammable storage building, paved parking area, warehouse renovation, fencing and demolition of one building.	349,489
3	The <b>sand removal</b> project will move 50,000 cubic yards of sand from Sound Side Road back into the park.	519,713
4	The <b>landscape improvements</b> project consists of boardwalk and stabilization, 350 concrete wheel stops, reclamation of the US 158 crosswalk area and stabilization of 8 acres on Sound Side Road.	86,258
5	The <b>building renovations</b> project includes renovations per the FIIP inventory.	286,906
6	The <b>park housing</b> project consists of site clearing, underground electric and water line extensions, septic system, driveway and construction of a ranger residence. Temporary housing is also included.	439,096
7	The <b>new barracks</b> project consists of demolition of one building; extension of water and electric lines; and construction of a 900 sq. ft. dormitory wing, an 1100 sq. ft. kitchen and dining area, HVAC and a septic system. Kitchen equipment and barracks furniture is also included.	445,014
<b>TOTAL:</b>		<hr/> \$2,514,014

### DEDICATED NATURE PRESERVE

**Jockey's Ridge Dedicated Nature Preserve:** In April 1998, 392 acres of Jockey's Ridge State Park were approved by the Governor and Council of State for designation as a Dedicated Nature Preserve. This designation supercedes areas previously designated as Registered Natural Heritage Area and provides more stringent rules for use and preservation.

The preserve contains the tallest active dune system on the coast of the Eastern United States. The parts of the preserve not consisting of bare sand include Dune Grass, Maritime Dry Grassland and Maritime Shrub communities. Two Significantly Rare plants - woolly beach heather (Hudsonia tomentosa) and maritime pinweed (Lechea maritima) are protected here. This is the only North Carolina population of maritime pinweed.

### FUTURE LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS

Completion of the Jockey's Ridge State Park master plan will require the acquisition of 6 acres. Remaining lots along Soundside Road should be added to the master plan boundary. The shifting sands often migrate onto the land between the existing park boundary and Soundside Road.

Master Plan Total Acreage	428 acres
Current Park Acreage	<u>422 acres</u>
<b>Acquisition Needs</b>	<b>6 acres</b>

### 1999 STAFF POSITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	
Park Superintendent II	1	Park Attendant	1	Park Attendant	1
Park Ranger II	2	Assistant Park Ranger	3	Office Assistant II	1
Park Ranger I	2	General Utility Worker	2		
Maintenance Mechanic II	2	Office Assistant II	1		
Office Assistant III	2				

### PROPOSED STAFF ADDITIONS

Permanent		Seasonal		Peak Load	